

ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE

8th July 2004

**PRESENT:-**

**Labour Group**

Councillor Southerd (Chair), Councillor Taylor (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Carroll, Dunn (substitute for Councillor Bell), Pabla (substitute for Councillor Whyman M.B.E.), Shepherd and Stone.

**Conservative Group**

Councillors Atkin, Bladen, Ford and Mrs. Hall.

**Independent Member**

Councillor Mrs. Walton.

**In Attendance**

Councillor Jones (Labour Group).

EDS/6. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Bell, Isham and Whyman, M.B.E. (Labour Group).

EDS/7. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd June 2004 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

EDS/8. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Shepherd declared a personal interest in respect of item No. 11, South Derbyshire Cycling Strategy Monitoring Report, as he was a member of a cycling club.

EDS/9. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS AND REPORTS**

The Chair had been made aware of an additional item and he was of the opinion that it should be considered as a matter of urgency. It concerned the Hatton Flood Alleviation Scheme approved at the January Meeting and the need to authorise Officers to seek planning consent.

**MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE**

EDS/10. **SWADLINCOTE HERITAGE ECONOMIC REGENERATION SCHEME SUB-COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:-**

*That the Open Minutes of the Swadlincote Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme Sub-Committee Meeting held on 4th May 2004 be received.*

EDS/11. **ANNUAL RESIDENTIAL LAND AVAILABILITY MONITORING REPORT**

It was reported that the Council was charged with ensuring that sufficient land was made available for new house building, via the grant of planning permission and allocations in the Local Plan. The Derby and Derbyshire Joint Structure Plan required the provision of 12,000 houses in the District in the period 1991-2011. This was split between the Swadlincote and Derby sub-areas in recognition of their different housing market and travel to work areas.

Government guidance required rigorous monitoring of house building rates in order to properly manage the release of land and ensure that no serious over or under provision of housing arose. To this end, the Council undertook an annual survey and the results of the 2004 survey were appended to the report.

District-wide trends were reported, comprising information on the housing completions in the last year and the overall number of dwellings completed to date, which was slightly below, but very close to the required rate. The number of houses under construction had increased significantly in 2002/03 and 2003/04. Overall, there was a shortfall of 1,839 dwellings which would be required in order to meet the Structure Plan requirement in full by 2011. However, the revised Deposit Draft Local Plan made more than sufficient provision to meet this shortfall. The Draft Plan was the subject of a Public Local Inquiry last year and the Inspector's report was expected by mid-September. The Inspector would recommend whether additional and/or different sites should be allocated in the Plan and the 2004 survey results would assist the Council in assessing his recommendations.

Sub-area trends were reported for each of the Swadlincote and Derby sub-areas. There were important variations, with inflated numbers of completions in the Swadlincote sub-area offsetting under performance in the Derby sub-area. The report concluded with information on the proportion of new housing on previously developed (brownfield) land.

Members sought further information about the development shortfall in the Derby sub-area. It was assumed that once planning permission had been granted, development would be undertaken. Members questioned how the Inspector would view the situation where developers did not build in accordance with planning consent. Officers explained the purpose of the annual monitoring report to show trends and the current position, to enable recommendations to Members and engage them in the Plan and Monitor Process. It might ultimately be felt appropriate to bring other sites forward, but Officers presently considered the position acceptable. The Inspector's recommendations would be received in approximately two months and, if appropriate, this issue could be revisited.

Further information was provided in response to questions from Councillors Ford and Atkin about allocations in the Willington and Aston-on-Trent areas. Councillor Bladen enquired whether the Inspector's recommendations would have to be adopted by the Council. It was noted that in future, an Inspector's recommendations would be binding on the local authority. The South Derbyshire Local Plan had been progressed under previous regulations and the Council had discretion to accept, reject or modify the recommendations of

an Inspector. Practically, it was prudent to accept the recommendations of the Inspector, unless there were significant reasons to do otherwise.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the Annual Residential Land Availability Monitoring Report be noted.***

EDS/12. **INDUSTRIAL LAND AVAILABILITY**

It was reported that since 1991, the availability of land designated for specified industrial uses, had been monitored closely. This was to compare development rates to those assumed by the Derby and Derbyshire Structure Plan industrial land allocation for the District for the period 1991 to 2011. Details of planning permissions, building commencements and completions were recorded on an annual basis and supplemented by site inspections. The figures for the period 1991 to 31st March 2004 were set out within the Monitoring Report submitted.

The Monitoring Report also considered the availability of services at the major allocated employment sites. This was identified among the Corporate Milestones for 2004/05 under the key aim of Economic Development in the Corporate Plan. The review of infrastructure requirements on major sites assisted in meeting the Corporate Plan Economic Development target “to bring forward sites identified in the South Derbyshire Local Plan for industrial and business development”.

Councillor Atkin voiced his concerns over land allocations in the Woodville area. There had been an adverse public reaction to recent residential developments in that area and he felt the Council should look at infrastructure issues before considering further planning applications. The Chair explained that the potential development sites might help to alleviate current problems through an appropriate planning gain agreement. As a planning authority, it was difficult to refuse an application if it met all development criteria. Windfall sites had to be treated on their own merits and there was a need for careful consideration of each application. Officers added that the Highways Authority recognised the traffic issues in Woodville and would not envisage further industrial development without highway improvements to reduce congestion. Councillor Taylor added that he was very concerned about the highway problems in Woodville. There might be the scope to alleviate current problems through highway improvements linked to development of the industrial sites in question.

The Deputy Chief Executive summarised that the two monitoring reports sought to demonstrate the Council’s pro-active approach to the “Plan, Monitor and Review” approach. Further reports would be submitted to the Committee periodically.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That the report be noted and that the availability of services to the major employment sites be kept under review.***

**EDS/13. SWADLINCOTE WALKING STRATEGY MONITORING REPORT**

Members were reminded that the Swadlincote Walking Strategy was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in 2001. The Committee received a report to advise of progress in implementing The Walking Strategy and to seek approval for the continuation of this work, in partnership with other interested parties. A review of the Strategy was also proposed to take account of the changing policy context.

The Strategy sought to maximise use of external funding and resources wherever possible. The majority of funding for work undertaken to date had been provided by Derbyshire County Council and private developers. This Council had contributed £10,000 towards the cost of developing part of National Cycle Route 63, which was also accessible to pedestrians. It was likely that further contributions towards the development of specific off-road multi-user access proposals would be sought in future years, in the form of revenue growth items. Continued staff involvement in the implementation of the Strategy could be met within existing resources.

Members discussed the area covered by the Strategy and questioned whether it could be extended to areas such as Stenson Fields and Melbourne. It was suggested that a review of the Strategy could include its expansion to serviced villages like Melbourne. Members discussed the benefits of walking and it was noted that this Strategy focussed on the utilitarian purpose of encouraging walking to use local facilities. Contributions could be sought from developers towards providing footpaths, in accordance with the Strategy. Councillor Ford commented that development of the Strategy to rural areas would be welcome and he made reference to a pedestrian fatality in a rural area where there was currently no footpath. Councillor Stone referred to the design of footpaths, to ensure they were open and well lit, to prevent problems through anti-social behaviour. Officers confirmed that the Walking Strategy covered such issues and explained the involvement of the Derbyshire County Council and the Crime and Disorder Partnership. Councillor Taylor asked when the policy would be reviewed as there had been a number of significant new developments, including the Swadlincote Woodlands Site. Councillor Mrs. Walton asked whether dog waste bins were provided on new footpaths. Currently the Strategy did not make reference to this.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Committee notes the content of the Swadlincote Walking Strategy Monitoring Report.***
- (2) That the Council continues to work in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and other interested parties to implement the Walking Strategy.***
- (3) That the Walking Strategy be reviewed, taking account of the Derbyshire Local Transport Plan and Department for Transport advice to local authorities on walking.***

**EDS/14. SOUTH DERBYSHIRE CYCLING STRATEGY MONITORING REPORT**

Members were reminded that the South Derbyshire Cycling Strategy was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in February 2001 (Minute No. PED/56 refers). A report was submitted which set out the progress made to date in working towards the targets identified in the Strategy, through the measurement of a variety of indicators. The Strategy sought to maximise the use of external funding and resources wherever possible. To date the majority of funding for work undertaken had been provided by other agencies. As reported earlier, the District Council had contributed £10,000 towards the cost of developing part of National Cycle Route 63. It was likely that further contributions towards the development of specific off-road infrastructure proposals would be sought in future years, in the form of revenue growth items. Continued staff involvement in the implementation of the Strategy could be met within existing resources.

Councillor Shepherd sought further information on the liaison which took place with neighbouring authorities, where cycling routes crossed district boundaries. He referred to a particular local route and noted that substantial residential development had taken place, although there had been little improvement to access onto the cycle path in question. The Officer explained the work undertaken through a county-wide liaison group and work with neighbouring authorities as part of the National Forest Cycling Strategy. However, there was presently no formal arrangement with Derby City Council. The Local Plans Manager suggested that any particular issues be forwarded to the Section, in order that these could be pursued.

Councillor Shepherd displayed maps of cycling routes produced by this authority and Derby City Council. The Officer clarified that the South Derbyshire document showed proposals for indicative cycling routes and was not specifically designed as a publicity document for use by cyclists, unlike the document produced by Derby City Council. Councillor Shepherd noted with disappointment that only the John Port School in Etwell was participating in a county cycle scheme. The Officer confirmed that Derbyshire County Council was responsible for this scheme and had achieved its 10% target of schools participating in the scheme. Councillor Carroll commented that several Melbourne schools had local travel plans, but at the junior school level, these tended to be walking based. Councillor Atkin noted the opportunity to promote cycling as the National Cycle Race would pass through the District in September.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the Committee notes the content of the Cycling Strategy Monitoring Report.***
- (2) That the Council continues to work in partnership with Derbyshire County Council and other interested parties to implement the Cycling Strategy.***
- (3) That the Cycling Strategy be reviewed, taking account of the forthcoming review of the Derby Joint and Derbyshire Local Transport Plans.***

**EDS/15. INDUSTRIAL AND OFFICE DESIGN AND LAYOUT – SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

It was reported that Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) was employed by local planning authorities to add detail to and aid the application of policies contained in the Local Plan. They were a material consideration and the Council was required to consult widely as to the S.P.G's format and content prior to adoption, in order to ensure that it would carry weight when applied as part of the development control process.

Industrial and office development had not previously been addressed in an SPG produced by the Council. A draft document was submitted which intended to assist applicants in achieving a high standard in the design and layout for such developments. It was intended to apply the SPG to new development, redevelopment and alterations to existing premises where planning permission was required.

The Chair welcomed the introduction of the guidelines. Councillor Taylor asked about cross-boundary developments and he questioned the opportunity to influence neighbouring planning authorities, where the development would have an impact on South Derbyshire. The Chair asked whether all planning authorities would be required to adopt such guidance. This was not the case and there were few local authorities that had adopted such guidance. The Council would be consulted by neighbouring planning authorities on developments close to the District boundary and this guidance could be promoted. The Deputy Chief Executive suggested that once the guidance was adopted, it could be shared with neighbouring local authorities and design guidance exchanged, to ensure that mutually acceptable developments took place. Councillor Jones sought further information about cross-border consultations and particularly the Member notification arrangements. He felt that where there was an impact on South Derbyshire, the local Members should be informed. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed that this issue should be researched and a further report provided to Members, with suggested criteria for Member notification.

Information was provided in response to a question from Councillor Atkin about barn conversions. Councillor Stone submitted a specific request for the reinstatement of grass verges along William Nadin Way, following the installation of services. The Chair advised that this issue was being pursued by Derbyshire County Council.

**RESOLVED:-**

- (1) That the draft Industrial and Office Design and Layout Supplementary Planning Guidance be made available for public consultation.***
- (2) That a further report be submitted to a future Meeting of the Committee, setting out details of any representations received and the amendments recommended for inclusion in the adopted version of the document.***

EDS/16. **HATTON FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME**

Further to Minute No. EDS/9 above, the Committee received an urgent report to enable the Hatton Flood Alleviation Scheme to be progressed. The Deputy Chief Executive reminded Members of the Scheme and it had been hoped to complete the flood alleviation works before the winter months. Regrettably, it would not be possible to start the scheme until the spring of 2005. There was a need to seek planning consent for some elements of the scheme and the previous Committee Minute did not give specific authorisation to Officers.

**RESOLVED:-**

***That Officers be authorised to submit a planning application and any other statutory applications required to ensure completion of the Hatton Flood Alleviation Scheme.***

EDS/17. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT [ACCESS TO INFORMATION] ACT 1985)**

**RESOLVED:-**

***That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets after each item.***

**REORGANISATION OF TOURISM WITHIN THE UK (Paragraph 9)**

***The Committee agreed to make representations regarding the future delivery of tourism and the continued development of the National Forest & Beyond destination.***

T. SOUTHERD

CHAIR